

THE PHARAOH KHUFU

The Pharaoh Khufu, or commonly known as Cheops, ruled in the 4th Dynasty (2551-2528 B.C.) He was the second Pharaoh of the period and he ruled for approximately 23 years. It was assumed that this was a highly structured society and he must have attained great wealth. Not much is known about the Pharaoh's personal life or his accomplishments. His most known and famous undertaking was the Great Pyramid of Egypt.

There are two theories surrounding the construction of his pyramid. The first theory, suggested by experts, suggests that slaves were forced under daily hard labor to work until the task was completed. The more logical and more supported theory, however, suggests that the Great Pyramid of Egypt was built by hundreds of skilled workers who camped near the pyramids and worked for a salary until the construction of the pyramid was completed.

Although he organized the construction of the pyramid, not much is known about his life due to the fact that his tomb was robbed. No remains of the mummy have ever been found and there is only an empty sarcophagus that lies in the center of the King's Chamber located inside the pyramid.

However, a statue was found in the temple of Abydos and it is thought that maybe this might give a slight insight into the Pharaoh's world and who he really was.

KHUFU CONTINUED

Khufu (2589-2566 BC) was the 4th Dynasty (2613-2498) pharaoh who *built the [Great Pyramid of Giza](#)*. Originally, the Great Pyramid stood 481 feet (146.6 m) tall. Although commonly called Cheops (and also Suphis) because of the late Greek influence on Egypt, the name Khufu is the original ancient Egyptian name for this king as demonstrated by his own cartouche. He reigned for approximately 24 years.

Although the Great pyramid has such fame, little is actually known about its builder, Khufu. Ironically, *only a very small statue of 9 cm has been found depicting this historic ruler*. This statue, pictured above and below, was not found in Giza near the pyramid, but was found to the south at the Temple of Osiris at Abydos, the ancient necropolis.

According to various inscriptions, Khufu probably did lead military into the Sinai, and raids into Nubia and Libya.

Khufu was the son of another great pyramid builder, King Sneferu. Khufu's mother's name was Hetepheres.

Although King Sneferu was remembered as a benevolent and beneficent ruler, Khufu is believed by some to have been a more ruthless and cruel despot. He was rumored in later times to have been prone to enjoying the fantastic stories of the reigns of his predecessors, as well as tales of magic and the mystical. His fame lasted throughout Egyptian history and he still had a funerary cult as late as the Saite Dynasty (26th Dynasty). Of course, whether or not he was a cruel ruler, he did command a tremendous ability to organize and mobilize workers. There was an extremely large amount of manpower necessary to build the Great Pyramid and its surrounding complex and tombs. Certainly Khufu would have had the benefit of witnessing the previous pyramid projects of his father, Sneferu.

The Great Pyramid stands witness to the ability of Khufu to lead and coordinate his people. Current theories espouse that the building of the Great Pyramid was not achieved by slave labor. Instead, the project defrayed taxes, which were paid in the form of goods and services as there was no monetary system. Also, due to the annual inundation of the Nile there was always a yearly segment of the population that had some time that they could not spend in their homes.

Curiously, although his father was probably buried in Dahshur, Khufu chose the Giza plateau to situate his pyramid, temples, and perhaps, his tomb. Also curiously, he did not choose the highest spot on the plateau, which was later used by his son and successor, Khafre. This gave Khafre's pyramid the illusion of being taller, when in fact the Great Pyramid is actually the taller pyramid.

By Andrew Bayuk